(c) At present, Ministry of Labour & Employment have no proposal under consideration to provide special grants to the States of North Eastern Region to give unemployment allowance to the unemployed.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Financial assistance to craftsmen and weavers

†1109. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the target has been fixed by Government to give financial assistance to craftsmen and weavers under the Self Employment Credit Card Scheme; and

(b) if so, the number of craftsmen and weavers who have been benefited, so far under this scheme, year-wise and State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) A target of issuing one lakh Artisan Credit Cards (ACC) to handicraft artisans has been fixed to provide them easier access to bank finance. Weavers are covered under the Swarojgar Credit Card (SCC) Scheme being implemented by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). The SCC Scheme covers *inter alia* vocations like fishermen, self-employed persons, self help groups (SHGs) and other micro-entrepreneurs. No specific target has, however, been fixed for weavers.

(b) So far 33,285 ACCs have been issued to artisans since the inception of the scheme in 2003-04, State-wise details of which are not available. Further, 1.79 lakh SCCs have been issued by various banks from September 2003 to 31 March 2005. State-wise details of SCCs issued to craftsmen and weavers separately are not available.

ARIs under REGP in NER

1110. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have established agro and rural industries in North-Eastern Region with special reference to Assam under the Rural Employment Generation Programme during the last three years;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the funds allocated for this purpose and the steps taken for the implementation of this programme?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) Units under the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) are set up by individual entrepreneurs in various parts of the country, including the north Eastern Region (NER) and Assam. Government provides the admissible financial assistance for this purpose.

(b) and (c) Details of units set up by and Government assistance provided to entrepreneurs under the REGP in the NER and in Assam respectively, during the last three years, are as follows:

Sl. No.	Year	Number of units set up under REGP		Margin money assistance provide (Rs. lakh)	
		Assam	NER (including Sikkim)	Assam	NER (including Sikkim)
1.	2002-03	559	1185	375.68	1054.99
2.	2003-04	1223	1952	806.83	1552.57
3.	2004-05	1658	2634	1277.42	2455.00

The margin money assistance in the NER is 30 per cent of the project cost for projects upto Rs. 10 lakh, as against 25 per cent for the rest of the country.

For popularising REGP among the potential rural entrepreneurs, workshops, awareness camps and exhibitions are regularly organized by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission. The target for such workshops, awareness camps and exhibitions during 2005-06 is 270.

Livelihood from ARIs

1111. SHRI N.R. GOVINDRAJAR: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of population earning livelihood from Agriculture and Agro Industries in the country, particularly in Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether Government are making additional efforts to promote agro based industries; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?